



Factors Contributing to Truancy

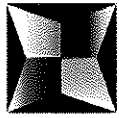
Research, and our own experience, shows that the factors contributing to truancy stem from three realms: family and community, school, and personal psychological characteristics. They are listed below.

School Factors

- ❖ Lack of effective and consistently applied attendance policies.
- ❖ Poor record-keeping, making truancy difficult to spot.
- ❖ Push-out policies, for example, suspension as a punishment for truancy and automatic “Fs” for students with poor attendance.
- ❖ Parents/guardians not notified of absences.
- ❖ Teacher characteristics, such as lack of respect for students and neglect of diverse student needs.
- ❖ Unwelcoming atmosphere, for example, an unattractive facility or one with chronic maintenance problems.
- ❖ Unsafe environment, for example a school with ineffective discipline policies where bullying is tolerated.
- ❖ Inadequate identification of special education needs, leading some students to feel overwhelmed and frustrated with their inability to succeed.

Home and Community Factors

- ❖ Family health or financial concerns that pressure the student to care for family members or work during school hours.
- ❖ Child is a victim of abuse or neglect.
- ❖ Pressures arising from teen pregnancy or parenting.
- ❖ Safety issues such as violence near home or between home and school.
- ❖ Parental alcoholism or drug abuse.
- ❖ Negative role models, such as peers who are truant or delinquent.
- ❖ Parents/guardians who do not value education and are complicit in student’s absences.



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~ Promoting attendance, attachment and achievement

Personal Factors

- ❖ Poor academic performance, sometimes due to special education needs, and a resulting lack of self-esteem.
- ❖ Unmet mental health needs.
- ❖ Alcohol and drug use and abuse.
- ❖ Lack of vision of education as a means to achieve goals.

Components of Effective Truancy Reduction Programs

- ❖ Parent/guardian involvement, or whole family involvement.
- ❖ A continuum of supports, including meaningful incentives for good attendance and consequences for poor attendance.
- ❖ Collaboration among community actors such as law enforcement, mental health workers, mentors, and social service providers, in addition to educators.
- ❖ Concrete and measurable goals for program performance and student performance. Good record keeping and on-going evaluation of progress toward those goals.

The National Center for School Engagement is an initiative of the COLORADO FOUNDATION FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN.

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Teens ages 16 to 19 not in school and not high school graduates (Percent) – 2009

Data Provided by: National KIDS COUNT Program

Scale: 3% - 11%

United States	6%	
Alabama	7%	
Alaska	5%	
Arizona	8%	
Arkansas	7%	
California	5%	
Colorado	8%	
Connecticut	4%	
Delaware	6%	
Florida	7%	
Georgia	7%	
Hawaii	7%	
Idaho	6%	
Illinois	6%	
Indiana	7%	
Iowa	5%	
Kansas	5%	
Kentucky	7%	
Louisiana	8%	
Maine	4%	
Maryland	5%	
Massachusetts	4%	
Michigan	6%	
Minnesota	4%	
Mississippi	7%	
Missouri	7%	
Montana	9%	
Nebraska	5%	
Nevada	11%	
New Hampshire	3%	
New Jersey	3%	
New Mexico	9%	
New York	5%	
North Carolina	7%	
North Dakota	5%	
Ohio	5%	
Oklahoma	8%	
Oregon	6%	
Pennsylvania	5%	
Rhode Island	7%	
South Carolina	7%	
South Dakota	6%	
Tennessee	5%	
Texas	7%	
Utah	5%	
Vermont	5%	
Virginia	4%	
Washington	6%	
West Virginia	9%	
Wisconsin	4%	
Wyoming	8%	

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<http://www.kidscount.org>**RELATED RESOURCES****Related Links**Casey Knowledge Center:
Education

KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief:

Reducing the High School

Dropout Rate

KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief:

Reducing the Number of

Disconnected Youth

Get more information on school

aged children from the Child

Trends Data Bank

Get more information on school

aged children from the Data

Resource Center

Related DataView School Age indicators in
"Data Across States".**KIDS COUNT Census Data Online**

View 2000 KIDS COUNT Census

data, covering hundreds of

indicators for thousands of

geographic areas.

Puerto Rico	8%	
Virgin Islands	N.A.	

Definitions: Teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in high school and are not high school graduates.

Those who have a GED or equivalent are included as high school graduates in this measure. The measure used here is defined as a "status dropout" rate. Inclusion of the group quarters population in the ACS in 2006 could have a noticeable impact on the universe population for this age group. Therefore, the 2007 through 2009 ACS estimates might not be fully comparable to estimates prior to 2006. This measure focuses on teens ages 16 to 19 rather than young adults 16 to 24 because a large share of 18- to 24-year-olds migrate across state lines each year. The high interstate migration rates confound the connection between state policies and programs and state dropout rates. Raw numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.
More...

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Footnotes: Updated October 2010.

S - Estimates suppressed when the confidence interval around the percentage is greater than or equal to 10 percentage points. N.A. - Data not available. A 90 percent confidence interval for each estimate can be found at Teens ages 16 to 19 not in school and not high school graduates.

Note: The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are not included in maps and rankings because they are not states and therefore comparisons on many indicators of child well being are not meaningful.

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Percent High School Dropouts (Percent) – 2010

Data Provided by: West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

Scale: 4.1% - 28.4%

West Virginia	16.8%	
Barbour	17.6%	
Berkeley	16.9%	
Boone	18.5%	
Braxton	16.8%	
Brooke	4.1%	
Cabell	21.2%	
Calhoun	13.2%	
Clay	14.4%	
Doddridge	15.0%	
Fayette	21.9%	
Gilmer	9.7%	
Grant	15.4%	
Greenbrier	17.6%	
Hampshire	14.5%	
Hancock	7.9%	
Hardy	18.1%	
Harrison	16.4%	
Jackson	14.5%	
Jefferson	13.4%	
Kanawha	23.5%	
Lewis	18.4%	
Lincoln	19.2%	
Logan	17.2%	
Marion	10.8%	
Marshall	13.4%	
Mason	27.9%	
McDowell	28.4%	
Mercer	10.8%	
Mineral	13.9%	
Mingo	26.4%	
Monongalia	8.9%	
Monroe	13.8%	
Morgan	23.0%	
Nicholas	20.0%	
Ohio	16.2%	
Pendleton	14.4%	
Pleasants	6.5%	
Pocahontas	12.3%	
Preston	16.1%	
Putnam	11.7%	
Raleigh	15.9%	
Randolph	19.4%	
Ritchie	14.0%	
Roane	14.5%	
Summers	21.7%	
Taylor	18.8%	
Tucker	6.4%	
Tyler	7.9%	
Upshur	18.1%	
Wayne	20.1%	

WEST VIRGINIA GRANTEE

West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund

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Margie Hale, Executive Director



The West
Virginia KIDS
COUNT
Fund works
to improve
the lives of
West

WEST VIRGINIA
KIDS COUNT
FUND

Virginia's at-risk children by:
identifying and supporting programs
that work; conducting research and
disseminating that research to its
constituents; and supporting public
policies that promote prevention and
early intervention.






RELATED KIDS COUNT DATA

Data Center

View West Virginia's main page or
the state profile.
View Other Education indicators
in "Data Across States".

KIDS COUNT Census Data Online

View 2000 KIDS COUNT Census
data, covering hundreds of
indicators for thousands of
geographic areas.

Webster	18.9%	
Wetzel	9.5%	
Wirt	11.2%	
Wood	13.2%	
Wyoming	18.6%	

Definitions: The percentage of students in grades 7-12 who leave a public school before graduation without transferring to another school.

Data Source: WV Department of Education.

Footnotes: At a state and county level, this indicator is based on a three-year average of school years. This percent is based on the number of 7th through 12th grade dropouts divided by the addition of the number of 7th through 12th grade dropouts and the number of 12th grade graduates.

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THE MATTIE C. STEWART FOUNDATION

The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation (MCSF) is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to reducing the dropout rate (Tax Identification Number 26-041498). The Foundation was established in the summer of 2007 in honor of Dr. Shelley Stewart's late mother, Mattie C. Stewart and is headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama. The mission of the Foundation is to create tools and resources to help educators, community leaders and parents effectively address the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate. For more information, visit mattiestewart.org.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT DROPOUTS

- Each year 1.2 million high school students drop out of school
- Every 26 seconds a student chooses to drop out of school
- Dropouts are 6 times more likely than high school graduates to commit crime and become incarcerated
- 75% of America's prison inmates are high school dropouts
- More than 80% of prison inmates are functionally illiterate
- Each year dropouts cost the US economy \$329 billion in lost economic opportunity and additional social services (welfare, health care, unemployment, incarceration, etc.)

ENDORSEMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation has been endorsed and supported by many national and regional organizations such as:

- *General Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance, Washington, DC*
- *National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson, SC*
- *Communities In Schools*
- *Shelby County, Alabama*
- *o2ideas, Inc., Birmingham, AL*
- *Verizon Wireless*
- *State Farm Insurance*
- *Pepsi Co.*

FOUNDATION TOOLS

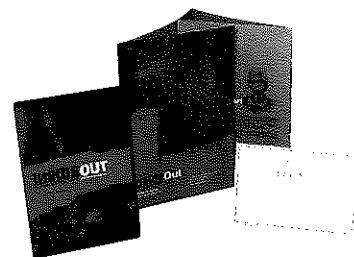
THE CHOICE BUS

The Choice Bus is a powerful experience-based learning tool that travels the country giving students, teachers and families a hands-on look at the importance of education along with the likely consequences that await most high school dropouts – prison. This customized school bus features a full-scale replica of a prison cell in the back of the bus. The 20-minute *Choice Bus* experience has been so successful that demand from schools and communities has resulted in the creation of additional buses. *The Choice Bus* can be scheduled online at mattiestewart.org



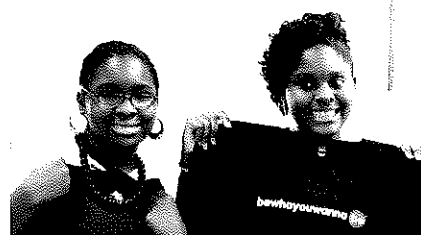
INSIDEOUT

InsideOut is an emotionally gripping 26-minute classroom documentary featuring prison inmates who share their stories of regret for not completing their high school education. Each inmate featured in the documentary volunteered to share their story in hopes that they can help others avoid making the same mistakes they did. *InsideOut* is appropriate for all ages and all grades and includes a companion Teacher's Guide to help expand on its powerful message. *InsideOut* can be ordered online at mattiestewart.org where visitors can also watch the documentary trailer.





Bewhoyouwanna beSM is a youth crime prevention/career mentorship program dedicated to inspiring at-risk youth with realistic, attainable career goals and a structured plan to achieve those goals. Through career mentorship, online resources and educational opportunities, children ages 7-13 have an opportunity to focus on a brighter future and a rewarding career while being encouraged to avoid illegal activities and questionable situations.



TOGETHER, WE CAN INCREASE THE NATION'S GRADUATION RATE AND SEND THE MESSAGE THAT EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO LIVING A SUCCESSFUL AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

PARTNER WITH US

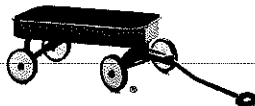
Innovation is a big part of The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, as is collaboration. From grassroot operations to corporate tie-ins, the Foundation has continually looked for ways to maximize efforts through like-minded partnerships. The merging of talents and attributes contribute greatly to the effectiveness of the Foundation's projects.

Partnerships are vital to combating the dropout crisis. The Foundation welcomes all entities and individuals who wish to make a difference. Financial support and volunteered time and services are all put to good use through the many programs of the Foundation. If you or your organization would like to partner with The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, please contact us.

Some partnerships with the Foundation include: America's Promise Alliance; National Dropout Prevention Center; Alabama Department of Education; Alabama Department of Corrections; o2ideas, Inc.; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Mississippi Department of Public Education; National Education Association; and Alabama and Georgia Chapters of Executive Women International.

The logo for o2ideas, featuring the text 'o2ideas' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font.

The logo for America's Promise, featuring the text 'AMERICA'S PROMISE' in a serif font, with 'THE ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH' in a smaller font below it.



If you are interested in partnering with The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, or utilizing one of our tools in your community, please contact us at 205.212.6400 or visit mattiestewart.org.

July 3, 2011

Putnam truancy program results show success

By Kate White

WINFIELD -- Fewer students ended up in circuit court for missing school last year -- when a county judge expected just the opposite.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Putnam County reported 199 magistrate truancy complaints, compared to 370 the previous school year.

After state lawmakers passed a law in 2010 making students officially "truant" after five absences instead of 10, Putnam Circuit Judge Philip Stowers expected more truancy cases to end up in court.

He credits the county's "Truancy Triage" program, which he started at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year to help speed up the process and get offenders back to school in a timely manner, without making them appear in circuit court.

"I thought our numbers would jump off the page," Stowers said. "I thought we'd go from having 370 complaints to 500."

Under Stowers' plan, after students miss five days of school without an excuse, their parents get a letter telling them to appear before Putnam County Magistrate Linda Hunt.

"In the past, the school system would send a list of truant students to the [state Department of Health and Human Resources], and they would investigate," Hunt said. "But if you get a list of 400 kids you don't have time to investigate all of those -- it's just not possible."

The number of letters sent to truant students actually increased within the last year, from 1,143 to 1,616, but Stowers said that's because of the change in the law.

The judge said that in the past, truant students who appeared in circuit court had often already missed an entire semester of school.

"If you let a child become truant a long time, they feel uncomfortable going back to school and being behind," Stowers said.

Each year between 2005 and 2008, Putnam County had between 305 and 393 truancy referrals.

Hunt said before the program started, there was never an ending to the truancy problem.

"Now we divert them here so that the DHHR doesn't get an onslaught of cases, and we can start here," Hunt said. "I have [the students and parents] come to me. Before, the DHHR was having to go find them at their home or school."

Hunt, who served as a counselor for Putnam County Schools for about 18 years before becoming a magistrate, said under the old process, there wasn't an efficient way to get students back in school.

"You had no leverage to create that need to go to school if a student didn't want to go," she said.

Stowers and Hunt both said the new program diverts truant students away from immediately having to hire a lawyer, meet with prosecutors and set hearings with circuit judges.

Now, when a student and parent appear in magistrate court, Hunt said, she starts off explaining to them the number of days they've been absent and tries to find out the reason they haven't been

attending school. She said she tries to evaluate whether it's the parent preventing the student from attending school, or, if the student is old enough, why they're not getting to class.

"One parent told us that she didn't realize kindergarten was important. The program, a lot of times, educates parents on the importance of school," Hunt said.

Serious cases, where a student blatantly refuses to go to school or has a problem with drugs, are still immediately sent to circuit court. Parents who are required to go to circuit court can face fines or jail time, Hunt said.

"Most times we try to give the parent and the child another chance to get back in school," she said.

Stowers said the revised process costs no more and still calls for a group effort from those who would be dealing with the problem anyway.

The statistics show the new plan is working well for both students and parents, he said, and the court system is using resources it would use anyway but is handling the truancy problem far more efficiently.

During the 2009-2010 school year, 370 students entered the truancy diversion program, records show. From that initial number, 45, or 12 percent, were referred by petition to circuit court. Twenty-three, or 6 percent, of students' parents were referred to magistrate court for misdemeanor truancy charges.

Overall, more than 80 percent of the student participants complied with the program requirements or self-corrected sufficiently and were allowed to be dismissed from the program, Stowers said.

Reach Kate White at kate.wh...@wvgazette.com or 304-348-1723.

Truancy Diversion Program

Controlling truancy gives young people a better chance for a successful life

Education can mean the difference between a life of hardship and struggle or one of fulfillment and success. It is well documented that most truancy cases can be attributed to a lack of parental involvement and support, low academic success, use of drugs and alcohol, and incidents of domestic violence in the home. The growing truancy epidemic places a burden on families, schools and communities.

In an effort to combat the detrimental effects of truancy, Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert initiated a Truancy Diversion Program (TDP) in 2005 in collaboration with Kentucky Commissioner of Education Gene Wilhoit. The TDP assists middle school students at risk of being charged with a truancy offense because of too many unexcused absences. The program uses a team approach to help students develop good attendance habits and improve their overall school experience. The TDP meets the needs of truant students by using education, prevention, accountability and treatment, if applicable, to address the issues surrounding truancy.

Helpful Links

[How the Truancy Diversion Program Works](#)

[Two-Phase Program](#)

[Contact Us For More Information](#)

How the Truancy Diversion Program Works

The success of the program depends upon a strong collaboration among the Truancy Diversion Program Review Team, which consists of judges, school personnel and court designated workers. Here is how the program typically works:

- Local judges who want to take part in the Truancy Diversion Program regularly attend meetings at each of the participating middle schools in their jurisdiction. Judicial involvement is critical to the program because it reinforces to students the importance of strong school attendance.

- The TDP Review Team meets weekly to ensure that truant middle school students fulfill the obligations outlined in their personal action plan.
- Court designated workers (CDWs) oversee the program's administrative duties, such as tracking attendance with the assistance of school personnel, scheduling court reviews, reporting on student participation, working with the county attorney on diversion agreements and assisting the judge. CDWs are employed by the Administrative Office of the Courts to help juveniles charged with offenses to enter diversion programs or to navigate the court system, based upon the court's ruling. Their work with troubled juveniles gives the CDWs insight into helping truant students.

Two-Phase Program

Precomplaint Phase: The Truancy Diversion Program is divided into two phases. The Precomplaint Phase is when the truant student and his or her parents meet with the TDP Review Team and attend a two-hour educational workshop.

Complaint Phase: The second phase is the Complaint Phase. This phase occurs when the student has been absent or tardy six or more times without a valid excuse and is considered habitually truant. The court designated worker fills out a complaint on the student. The student and his or her parents attend weekly sessions with the TDP Review Team and comply with recommendations and requirements set forth by the team. The Complaint Phase of the program lasts 10 weeks.

Last Updated 5/19/2011

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